



## **Special Education Higher Education Collaborative Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is the *Special Education Higher Education Collaborative*?**

The Higher Education Collaborative is a partnership between the Department of Education, higher education, and local public schools. The goal of this partnership is to make available the excellent graduate level special education teacher training opportunities that currently exist on the campuses of the university and colleges, to people who have limited geographic access to those campuses.

### **2. Which institutions are involved in the *Higher Education Collaborative*?**

The University of Vermont, Castleton State College, Johnson State College, and Lyndon State College.

### **3. Who are the faculty in the program?**

Cohorts are taught and supervised by faculty from both college and university faculty, as well as master teachers from the local community who have adjunct status at the participating institutions.

### **4. What is a “cohort”?**

A “cohort” is a learning community of 10-15 graduate students. These students commit to each other to (a) participate in the core courses and (b) assist each other throughout their time of study.

### **5. Who is eligible to participate?**

Graduate students who (a) already have a Vermont teaching license and (b) intend to function as special education teachers are considered “high priority participants.”

General education teachers who are interested in earning the special education endorsement, but intend to remain as classroom teachers may participate as well.

### **6. Do I have to already have Vermont teaching license to participate?**

Yes.

### **7. If I have a bachelors degree in another area, but do not have a general education teaching license, can I participate in this program?**

Not at this time.

### **8. What is the typical course schedule?**

There are several schedule options that depend on the needs of the cohort members and the instructor availability. It is likely that cohorts will choose to take one course per semester and one or two over the summer.

**9. Can the internship be related to my daily work in the schools?**

Yes, if you are working with elementary, middle school or high school students and have access to students on IEP's. Cohort students who are general educators or special educators working through a waiver or provisional license, or are paraprofessionals who have either a general education teaching license may incorporate their internship into their daily work.

Please note, it might be necessary to step outside of your immediate school situation to engage in activities in other classrooms or schools. These opportunities will offer you perspective. To that end, you will need to work with your principal/supervisor to make the appropriate arrangements.

**10. How are the field-based sites chosen?**

Two criteria are used to determine cohort sites. First, a geographic location that makes it difficult for cohort members to access an on-campus special education teacher-training program. The second criteria is a regional location where 10 to 15 students will commit to participation in a cohort.

**11. How am I “advised” in this program?**

The HEC Site Coordinator and cohort faculty will offer guidance and suggestions on an individual basis through field supervision and during class time. The internship will incorporate individual professional development through the formal use of a competency based self-assessment tool and a developmental internship portfolio. In addition, cohort members are encouraged to support each other through out the program of study.

**12. Are cohort members required to meet the same Vermont licensing standards as traditional on-campus student?**

Yes. The location of service delivery does not alter the requirements. Participants will be required to complete a professional portfolio as well as meet all of the standards within the area of endorsement, and the requirements of their institution of higher education. It is the ultimate responsibility of participants to be familiar with the Vermont Regulations Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professional (available on the DOE Web site).

**13. What is the cost of the program?**

Students will have to pay the course fee established by the HEC. The tuition is currently \$650 per course and is subject to change. Books and materials are additional and the responsibility of the student.

**14. Is financial aid available?**

Participants are encouraged to access available financial support from their local school districts.

Additionally, there may be financial support for the 2006 program. Scholarship assistance for the 2006 is dependent on federal funding. Information will be available at a future date.

#### **15. Who do I contact for more information?**

Amy Watson, program assistant to the HEC  
Vermont Department of Education  
120 State St.  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
828-0262  
[amywatson@education.state.vt.us](mailto:amywatson@education.state.vt.us)

Patty Morgan, Coordinator  
Vermont Department of Education  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
802 828 -0554  
[plmorganvt@aol.com](mailto:plmorganvt@aol.com)